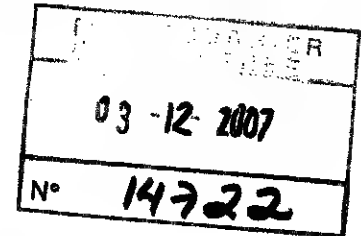


[FRA – Directorate, A-1060 Vienna: Rahlgasse 3]

Mr Hans-Gert Poettering
 President of the European Parliament
 European Parliament, Bât. Paul-Henri Spaak, 11B011
 60, rue Wiertz
 BE 1047 Brussels



Vienna, 23 November 2007

Dear President of the European Parliament,

I have the pleasure to send to you the 'Report on Racism and Xenophobia in the Member States of the EU' by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).

In 2007, this report replaced the Annual Report on the situation of racism by the EUMC which was previously sent to you in November of the year of publication. The one-off change is due to the transitional arrangements currently in place at the Agency and changes to the publication timeframe of future annual reports. In 2008, the Agency will transmit both of its Annual Reports as indicated in article 4 (1) (e) & (g) of its regulation by 15 June.

The 'Report on Racism and Xenophobia in the Member States of the EU' details information and developments for the year 2006. The report covers legal issues, the situation in relation to employment, housing and education, as well as racist violence and crime. The collected information is the result of an on-going data collection exercise involving the RAXEN National Focal Points (NFPs), one in each Member State. This involved 27 NFPs, taking account already of the latest EU enlargement.

The report indicates that racist violence and crime remain a serious concern across the EU. The report again emphasises that most Member States still have insufficient data collection on racist violence and crime, although good practices in response to the problem either continued or emerged in some Member States in 2006. This means that trends in recorded crime cannot be reported, and crime prevention policies risk being based on ad hoc responses to individual situations. At the same time, the report also offers encouraging examples of good practice initiatives in some Member States that endeavour to improve police-community relations and police recording and response mechanisms to victims of racist crime.

By the end of 2006 there were still a few Member States lagging behind in transposition of the Racial Equality Directive, and in some countries still no specialised body was in place. In addition, given the fact that the protection

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system envisaged by the Directive depends on the awareness and initiative of victims, awareness-raising activities within Member States targeting potential victims of discrimination must become an integral part of the policy response.

Information in 2006 points to a pattern in housing discrimination and exclusion, which is characterised by continuing housing disadvantages for migrants and, in particular, by an increasingly problematic segregation of Roma. At the same time, the report also notes an increased public and political awareness as regards discrimination and related inequalities both in employment and in the education sector, and the need for policies to combat these.

The fight against discrimination in many Member States is still hindered by a continuing lack of adequate data on the subject. However, there are signs that some Member States are beginning to improve data collection in this area. FRA continues to emphasise that good data collection is a necessary tool to combat more effectively racial discrimination and inequalities.

In addition to this latest report of FRA, I enclose a recent edition of our magazine *Equal Voices* that features speeches given at FRA's opening ceremony on 1 March 2007. It also contains outside perspectives and comments from human rights organisations regarding the Agency's future work.

At the Fundamental Rights Agency, we are very much looking forward to continuing the cooperation with you in the future, so that we can together promote an inclusive society founded on the basis of respect for, and adherence to, fundamental rights.

Yours sincerely,



Anastasia Crickley
Chairperson of the FRA Management Board



Constantinos Manolopoulos
Acting Director

Enclosures:

Report on Racism and Xenophobia in the Member States of EU
Equal Voices, Issue 21 (October)

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